

REMARKS

In response to the Examiner's rejection of claims 17-22 for being anticipated by the Jimenez U.S. Patent No. 5,445,624 or by the Trotta U.S. Patent No. 6,325,790 or by the Helgerson U.S. Patent No. 6,149,996, applicant is canceling claims 17-22

The allowability of claims 11-16 is noted.

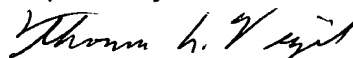
However, upon reading claims 11-16, applicant noted there was some confusion in the language in the claims relative to reference to the distal portion and the distal tip. To clarify which element was being referred to, applicant has reworded slightly the language in claims 11-16 to make it clear which element was being referred to. Also applicant has placed the tapered feature of the distal portion in a new claim 23.

As so amended grammatically, claims 11-16 and 23 remain allowable over the prior art searched and of record herein.

Applicants submit that an earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that end is requested.

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Respectfully submitted,



Thomas R. Vigil
WELSH & KATZ, LTD.
120 South Riverside Plaza
22nd Floor
Chicago, IL 60606-3912
Direct Telephone: 1-312-775-0407
Telephone: 1-312-655-1500
Fax: 1-312-655-1501
Email: trvigil@welshkatz.com